

INTERVIEW:

Daniel Pierson

BY SCOTT R. GOURLEY

Deputy PEO Land Systems discusses the Joint Center for Ground Vehicles.

According to Deputy Program Executive Officer (PEO) for Land Systems (LS) Daniel Pierson, one interservice initiative that continues to garner the spotlight within the PEO is the Joint Center for Ground Vehicles (JCGV).

JCGV, which has been operational since August 2010, is a joint service construct between the Army and the Marine Corps, formed from existing organizations and infrastructure, to address current and future technical and resource challenges surrounding ground vehicles. Its key tenants are to increase efficiency, reduce costs, and synchronize technology development – ultimately improving the effectiveness of the ground vehicle system development and acquisition across both the Army and the Marine Corps.

The JCGV is led by the JCGV Governance Board, which includes leaders from the Army's PEOs for Ground Combat Systems (PEO GCS) and Combat Support and Combat Service Support (PEO CS&CSS); the Marine Corps PEO LS; Tank Automotive Research Development and Engineering Center (TARDEC); Systems Engineering, Interoperability, Architectures and Technology (SIAT), Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC); Office of Naval Research (ONR) Code 30; and the Tank-automotive and Armaments Command Life Cycle Management Command (TACOM LCMC). JCGV is currently funded by the participants as



part of their normal course of doing business, and efficiencies are gained through close collaboration.

Looking back at the organizational evolution, Pierson offered, "One of the biggest things that just recently happened was that I think we finally got consensus on a shared vision. Everyone had been agreeing in concept and the effort had been proceeding, but I would say that it was really about January of this year when everyone reached a point where we had a shared vision that actually went so far as to define an end state for JCGV."

That end state includes: The JCGV Governance Board formally recognized by Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), Congress, services, and industry as the means to an end; Detroit Arsenal is formally declared the Joint Center of Excellence for Ground Vehicles by the

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Department of Defense (DoD) and Congress; the JCGV Governance Board is recognized as representing the ground vehicle acquisition community and is the single recognized authoritative voice for complex cross-cutting issues in this domain; senior leadership and industry look to the Governance Board to seek subject matter expert technical and programmatic input, address concerns, issues, or need for data – processes built for quick turn of requests; resources (people and dollars) are properly aligned to prioritized efforts; shared vision and investments exist across PEOs and service ground vehicle programs; open and frequent communication among PEOs and other board members to make more informed decisions and raise the level of awareness on cross-cutting issues; and the JCGV Governance Board creates a culture of stewardship, use of best practices, common tools and processes, continuous improvement to drive out inefficiencies, and ensures a trained and ready workforce with proper skill sets.

"What is really nice now is that when all the Governance Board principals get together they are all espousing the same philosophy and same logic trail of why we need to be doing what we're doing," Pierson said. "And the board is really starting to bring the community together to collaborate."

As examples of this collaboration, Pierson pointed to a number of JCGV initiatives currently under way.

"The biggest success I would say is in the S&T [science and technology] world, because we have a dedicated S&T director with a well-defined process for identifying the Marine Corps' needs," he said. "And frankly the Army has looked at that process and adopted a lot of it as well. What that has done is that we now have a very good collaboration across the S&T community, including ONR for the Marine Corps and TARDEC for the Army. Those organizations are focused on sharing the investments that each service is making, particularly when it comes to ground vehicle technology."

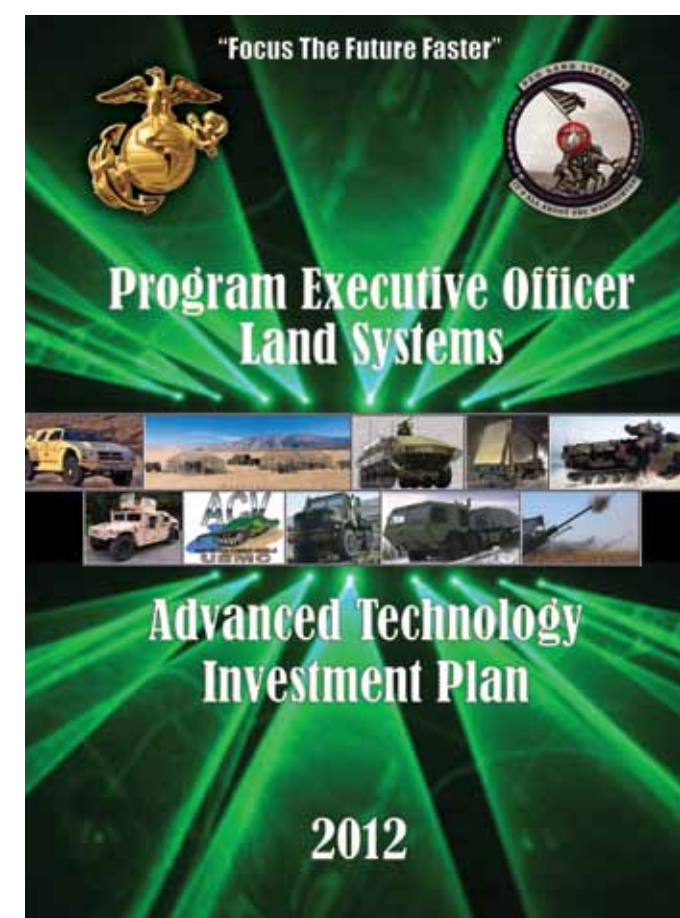
"Every year we [PEO LS] have been publishing the *Advanced Technology Investment Plan* that Mike Halloran, our S&T director, puts together for us," he added. "And in that plan, you see references to billions of dollars that the Army has highlighted in S&T initiatives. We are correlating those initiatives to actual needs of our programs. And that annual plan also shows industry what our needs are and what things we are tracking."

"That's where the JCGV Governance Board really begins to pay off," he said. "That board includes the technical community that supports our programs as well as the PEOs who manage the programs. And when you bring that community together now you can start to talk about which technologies are on which burner and how best to target which programs for transition. The folks who are managing the programs are looking at the technology portfolios, schedules, and resources, and they are talking to the technologists and actually having conversations about evolving technologies that might be emerging too late, too early or heading down the wrong path entirely."

"That's the kind of dialog that the Governance Board will bring to the table," Pierson stated. "We're still early. We're only a couple of years into this. And I don't want to oversell how much progress we are really making. But clearly the momentum has picked up and we can make great strides in an area where there is much room for improvement."

"A second area we are focused on is operational energy," he continued. "That's an area where we've hooked arms with the Army, gone to the Governance Board and emphasized the need for us to address this from the ground vehicle domain rather than sitting back and waiting for direction from those responsible for setting policy. So we have decided

PEO Land Systems image



to take a more active role as a community in helping to define how we are going to address operational energy in our programs."

The result not only continues the active cooperation with the Army but also with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense Operational Energy Plans and Programs, led by Sharon E. Burke, to better understand policy initiatives and help identify and define Operational Energy applications.

"What we've collectively moved towards is taking a more scenario-based or holistic look at how you operationally deploy systems and then looking at operational energy from that context," Pierson explained. "That's in contrast to the more 'platform-dependent view' that has been examined in the past. The Operational Energy Plans and Programs Office has embraced that new approach and is assisting us with funding to the Army to begin to invest in some of the modeling that will be required to look at this."

"This is another example of how working jointly and collaboratively together with the Army we can garner support from outside stakeholders such as OSD for JCGV initiatives," he added.

Another area of JCGV community activity highlighted by Pierson involves enterprise architecture. Acknowledging that this area was "a little bit harder" than some others due to the need to get engineers and technologists to focus on single approaches, he noted that the Army and Marine Corps "are in dialog with a community of engineers working on it and trying to steer to a common framework that we can all hang our hats on."

Pierson offered modeling and simulation as a fourth example of expanded collaboration emerging from JCGV.

"That's another area where I think the community is really coming together," he said. "We started by conducting a modeling and simulation inventory, as best we could, across the Army and Marine Corps. We looked at the tool sets that we are using in the development, testing, and analysis of ground vehicle programs. That effort is designed to 'benchmark' the best tools to use in this domain.

"What happened in the past is that program managers would typically invest just in those tools that directly impacted their programs," he asserted. "But there's never been a big vision for tools that could be used across the community, which you could build upon and grow. Now, there are some generic tools out there, but they are primarily for force-level analysis. The reality has still been that each PM invested in the specific tools that were best for his specific platform. But now what we are trying to do as a community is to figure out which tool sets make the most sense to invest in as a community. Then let's invest in them and mature them.

"Now we're not going to force the PMs to use these tools," he clarified. "But as a technical community, these are the ones that we are going to stand behind and push to develop and further mature."

As a subset of the modeling and simulation tool effort, the JCGV has also explored a range of portfolio analysis tools designed to help the PEOs manage the myriad systems under their responsibility.

"The whole JCGV concept started with the Secretary of Defense looking to explore a 'center of mass' in the Warren, Mich./TACOM area for the ground vehicle science and technical community," Pierson continued. "And we have remained true to trying to keep that center of mass and leveraging it as best we can."

As an example of this leveraging, he highlighted the Army's April 2012 opening of their Ground Systems Power and Energy Lab at TARDEC.

"We were out there for the grand opening, but more importantly we were involved with the early part of planning that facility as to the type of capabilities that would be required to support Marine Corps programs as well," he said. "And that's just another example of the two services coming together and looking at leveraging and not duplicating each other's capabilities."

Shifting to where the JCGV will go from here, Pierson offered the analogy of "taking it to the next level" through "recognition by the Congress and OSD that the Joint Center is both a benchmark for how to do business and a tool for them to use in the future.

"For the Joint Center and the Governance Board to reach its full potential we really need Congress and OSD to recognize it," he said. "They need to know that they have a place to go to for non-biased subject matter expertise and answers for cross-cutting domain issues on ground vehicles. Typically they would go to a single PEO or a single PM and get an answer that might be very 'parochial' as to a specific platform. But now they have an opportunity to go to a community of subject matter experts and talk about big issues associated with ground vehicles – like survivability and mobility.

"And we would also like to have industry jump on board as well," he added. "We would like to see them use the Governance Board as a means for them to share good ideas. I am sure that the folks who support both services have ideas for efficiencies and commonalities that we may not be seeing. So I view the Governance Board as a place for them to bring their good ideas to inform an entire community rather than trying to track down people all over the country."

While pointing to multiple threads of JCGV progress over the past two years, Pierson acknowledged, "We didn't go too fast into the Pentagon or too fast to Congress because we needed to get our legs under us. We needed to make sure we did have a good vision that we can sustain.

WOUNDED WARRIORS

One internal PEO LS initiative that brings a special sense of pride to the entire organization involves its expanded professional involvement with America's wounded warriors.

"About a year and a half ago, the Navy adopted a wounded warrior intern program, which expanded the existing service intern program to include wounded warriors," Deputy PEO Land Systems Daniel Pierson said. "The process provides a little more hiring latitude, because, frankly, a lot of our wounded warriors won't have [college] degrees, which makes it difficult to bring them into government jobs."

PEO LS showed their enthusiasm for the effort by submitting a request that went all the way to the Marine Requirements Oversight Council (MROC) for permission to fill two of the organization's staff billets through that program.

"It got approved," Pierson said. "And with that permission, we then pursued searching out the right candidates."

In spite of some challenges along the way, Pierson was pleased to announce the July 2012 arrival of two intern nominees, who will both be entering the organization's logistics domain. He had initially been approached by the two young lance corporals during a "wounded warrior hunt" that he also supports.

"Lance Cpl. John Curtin from Brewster, N.Y., is a double amputee and Lance Cpl. John Patterson from Columbia, Md., is a single amputee," he said. Both Marines were injured in Afghanistan due to IED blasts. "They were very excited when they heard about our internship program and we have already got them into training. This is an outstanding opportunity for these fine young warriors to learn a new but related career field and to continue to contribute to the Marine Corps in a very meaningful and significant way. Upon successful graduation from this four year program, they will be GS-12 equivalent Marine Corps Logisticians or Instructional Systems Specialists who can apply that knowledge to planning and execution of sustainment for critical Marine Corps weapons systems.

"It's really gotten the staff excited about having these guys here," he added. "And for all of us, it's a constant reminder of the seriousness of what we do every day."

"I know John [Patterson] would agree with me in saying: I am looking forward to starting my life again in this new career field, and it's extremely rewarding knowing that I'm contributing to the Marine Corps as much as I can," said Curtin, Navy Acquisition Logistics Intern Program nominee.

"In order for us to reach our potential and take this idea to the next level we need to engage the community. So I think the time is right. And that's where we're heading with this effort – to start engaging senior leaders, specifically those who control the resources, to show them the benefits of what we are trying to do. Because only then will we really get the resources we need to build the initiatives that will bring the benefits of commonality and standard processes to U.S. ground vehicles."